

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 298101

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE SENT TO ROME DTG R 240003Z DEC 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

QUOTE CONFIDENTIAL STATE 298101

FOL RPT STATE 298101ACTION BANGKOK BONN BRUSSELS COPENHAGEN

DUBLIN EC BRUSSELS JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR LUXEMBOURG LONDON

MANILA DEC 18 QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 298101

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, OVIP (MOERSCH, KARL)

SUBJECT: MOERSCH'S VISIT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ASEAN

- - - ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY

REF: A) STATE 25390; B) SINGAPORE 5045; C) MANILA

- - - 16690; D) BONN 19750

1. FULFILLING PROMISE (REF A) TO INFORM DEPARTMENT OF
RESULTS OF FRG MINISTER OF STATE MOERSCH'S VISIT

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TO SOUTHEAST ASIA, FRG EMBOFF SCHNITTGER CALLED RECENTLY

ON DEPARTMENT OFFICERS. SCHNITTGER, READ
NG FROM
BONN CABLES, GAVE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF MOERSCH'S
TRIP TO FOUR ASEAN COUNTRIES AND HIS TALKS WITH VARIOUS
LEADERS OF THESE COUNTRIES (HE SAID THAT INDONESIA WAS
NOT VISITED.).

2. SCHNITTGER'S ACCOUNT PARALLELED THAT REPORTED IN
REF B RE ASEAN DESIRE TO INCREASE DIALOGUE WITH EC,
PARTICULARLY IN ECONOMIC FIELD BUT ALSO ON POLITICAL
SUBJECTS. SCHNITTGER'S ACCOUNT DID NOT GIVE MUCH STRESS
TO ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY AND NO MENTION
WAS MADE AT ALL OF MOERSCH'S INVOLVEMENT IN THIS ISSUE
IN MANILA AS REPORTED REF C. WE FOUND LITTLE IN

SCHNITTGER'S ACCOUNT THAT WAS NEW OR WHICH RAN COUNTER
TO OUR OWN ASSESSMENT OF ASEAN ATTITUDES. IN ENSUING
DISCUSSION WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS ABOUT HOW RELATIONS
WITH EC AND ASEAN COULD BE DEVELOPED, SCHNITTGER
TENDED TO DOWNGRADE SHORT AND MEDIUM RUN PROSPECT OF
CONCRETE EC DEALINGS WITH ASEAN. HE OPINED SUCH TIES
AS MAY BE FORTHCOMING WOULD BE ESTABLISHED ON BILATERAL
BASIS BY BOTH EC AND ASEAN MEMBERS OR ALTERNATIVELY
MULTILATERALLY BY EC SIDE AND BILATERALLY BY ASEAN
MEMBERS. IN SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO HOW FRG MIGHT MOVE

TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH ASEAN AS RESULT OF MOERSCH'S
TRIP, SCHNITTGER SAID ONLY EXCHANGE OF TRADE UNION
VISITS WAS BEING ACTIVELY CONSIDERED, THIS BEING THE KIND
OF FIELD WHERE FRG TECHNICAL ADVICE MIGHT BE USEFUL.
AS FAR AS ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY PROPOSAL
IS CONCERNED, SCHNITTGER GAVE US IMPRESSION THAT FRG
SEES THIS AS CONCEPT TO BE PURSUED AS LONG RANGE GOAL
WITH GOOD PART OF ASEAN RHETORIC ON THIS SUBJECT INTENDED
FOR EFFECT ON THIRD WORLD AND COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. IN
THIS REGARD HE NOTED THAT MOERSCH WAS GIVEN CLEARLY
TO UNDERSTAND BY MARCOS THAT PHILS REGARD SECURITY
TIES TO US AS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO MANILA. WE WOULD
ALSO NOTE THAT IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH FRENCH
EMBOFF ON ASEAN, FRENCH VOICED SIMILAR SKEPTICISM ABOUT
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ABILITY TO ARRANGE CLOSER CONCRETE TIES BETWEEN EC
AND ASEAN IN SHORT TIME FRAME ALTHOUGH GENERAL AND
LARGELY COSMETIC DISCUSSIONS ON ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
MATTERS MAY OCCUR BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NOTED REPORTS OF MUTUAL
SATISFACTION WITH THE EC-ASEAN ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS
AND WE ARE PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH THE WIDE RANGE

OF CONCRETE ECONOMIC PROJECTS, RANGING FROM TARIFF RECLASSIFICATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER TO STUDY OF BULK SHIPMENT HANDLING, WHICH ARE BEING DISCUSSED IN THE EC-ASEAN JOINT STUDY GROUP AS REPORTED IN EC A-467 (NOTAL). IT IS OBVIOUSLY TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WHAT CONCRETE RESULTS WILL COME FROM THESE STUDIES BUT THEY MAY SUGGEST A BETTER POTENTIAL OF COOPERATIVE DEALING BETWEEN EC AND ASEAN ON ECONOMIC SUBJECTS THAN THE ABOVE CITED COMMENTS WOULD ALLOW.

4. COMMENT: OUR READING OF THE ASEAN MEMBERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY IN SEA IS THAT MOST CONTINUE TO SEE IT AS AN ULTIMATE GOAL -- ONE TO BE ACHIEVED WHEN CONDITIONS WARRANT. WHILE THERE ARE DIFFERENCES AMONG THE MEMBERS ON HOW THEY PERCEIVE

THIS CONCEPT -- MALAYSIA, FOR EXAMPLE IS A STRONG PRO-PONENT OF THE IDEA -- WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE ASEAN MEMBERS -- EVEN INCLUDING MALAYSIA -- WISH TO SEE THE US WITHDRAW ITS SECURITY PRESENCE FROM THE AREA UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ALTHOUGH THEY DO WISH US PRESENCE TO BE RATHER INCONSPICUOUS AND LOW KEY.

EVEN AS A FUTURE GOAL, HOWEVER, THE ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT HAS ITS PRESENT IMPORTANT USES. IT SERVES, FOR EXAMPLE, TO ESTABLISH ASEAN'S NONALIGNED CREDENTIALS AND ITS DESIRE TO STEER AN INDEPENDENT COURSE, FREE FROM BIG POWER DOMINATION, THEREBY REDUCING THE THREAT OF DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION IN THIRD WORLD CONTEXTS.

WHILE WE EXPECT THAT AT THE FORTHCOMING ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING THE MEMBERS WILL REITERATE THEIR ADHERENCE TO THE CONCEPT OF THE ZONE, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT
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ASEAN IS YET READY TO IMPLEMENT IT, EXCEPT IN CERTAIN RESTRICTED AND LARGELY SYMBOLIC AREAS AS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE CASE OF THE PROPOSED TREATY OF AMITY AND COOPERATION.

ASEAN'S POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE CONCEPT OF A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY SHOULD, WE THINK BE PERCEIVED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF A GROUP WHICH IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING TO FIND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL FOOTING. WHILE THE COLLAPSE OF INDOCHINA HAS RESULTED IN A CONSIDERABLE IMPETUS TO ASEAN COOPERATION AND COHESIVENESS, AND TO ITS POLITICAL IMPORTANCE BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE REGION, THERE ARE STILL MANY PROBLEMS WHICH ASEAN MUST SOLVE IF IT IS TO REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL. FOR EXAMPLE, IT AS YET HAS NO ORGANI-

ZAT

ONAL STRUCTURE AND THE VIEWS OF ITS MEMBERS ARE
STILL QUITE FRAGMENTED ON A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS --
RANGING FROM SECURITY QUESTIONS ON THE ONE HAND TO THE
LEVEL OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION ON THE OTHER.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES TO US LIES
PRIMARILY IN THEIR ESSENTIAL MODERATE, NON-COMMUNIST
ORIENTATION. WHILE THEIR FUTURE VIABILITY DEPENDS
PRIMARILY ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS AND THE "NATIONAL
RESILIENCE" OF EACH, THEIR COOPERATION IN THE ASEAN
FRAMEWORK PROVIDES AN ADDED DIMENSION TO THE POLITICAL
INTEGRITY AND, ULTIMATELY THE SECURITY OF THE REGION.
THE US, WHILE NOT WISHING TO DETRACT FROM ASEAN'S
INDIGENEOUS CREDENTIALS BY OVER-IDENTIFICATION WITH THE
ORGANIZATION, SHOULD SUPPORT IT QUIETLY BUT ONLY IN
WAYS THAT WILL ENHANCE ITS CREDIBILITY.

POSTS AND US MISSION EC BRUSSELS MAY DRAW ON ABOVE IF
SUBJECT OF US VIEWS ON ASEAN SHOULD ARISE. KISSINGER
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